

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-07 SP-03 PM-07 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 PRS-01 L-03 OC-06 CCO-00 AID-20

PA-04 USIA-15 DRC-01 EUR-25 NEAE-00 SAM-01 SAB-01

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P 121500Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6153

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 2121

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP MARR EG

SUBJECT: STATUS OF SOME ASPECTS OF NIMBUS STAR/MOON

1. WITH EXECUTE ORDER FOR NIMBUS STAR/MOON NOW GIVEN, IT SEEMS DESIRABLE RECAPITULATE FOR DEPT STATUS OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF EMBASSY ASSOCIATION WITH THAT OPERATION.

2. COMMUNICATIONS. SINCE DISPATCH CAIRO 1964, TASK FORCE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER HAS ARRIVED TO COORDINATE INSTALLATION OF MOBILE COMMO EQUIPMENT IN EMBASSY COMPOUND. THIS, IT DEVELOPS, WILL BE HOUSED IN TWO VANS. TOTAL OF 21 (RATHER THAN 12) COMMUNICATORS WILL BE DEPLOYED TO HANDLE EQUIPMENT. THEY WILL WEAR CIVILIAN CLOTHES WHILE ON DUTY IN EMBASSY COMPOUND. ACCORDING CINCEUR INSTRUCTIONS, CTF-65 PERSONNEL WILL NEGOTIATE WITH GOE THE REQUISITE COMMERCIAL CIRCUITRY TO SUPPORT OPERATION. WHEN ACTIVATED, THIS COMMO FACILITY WILL BE ENTIRELY INDEPENDENT OF OUR OWN. ALTHOUGH COMSIXTHFLT HAS RECOMMENDED TO JCS THAT IT NEGOTIATE WITH STATE PERMISSION TO TERMINATE LINES IN AMEMBASSY SWITCHBOARD, TASK FORCE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER HERE INDICATES THIS NOT NECESSARY. ON BALANCE, WE WOULD NOT FAVOR TERMINATING SUCH LINES IN AMEMBASSY SWITCHBOARD SINCE MILITARY TRAFFIC OF THE TYPE THAT MAY BE EXPECTED WOULD UTTERLY CONFUSE OUR EGYPTIAN OPERATORS AND FURTHER DEGRADE OUR ALREADY LIMITED TELEPHONE CAPABILITY.

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3. PUBLIC RELATIONS: DESPITE MANY PROMISES FROM MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, SCA AND MININFO SOURCES, PUBLIC MEDIA HANDLING HAS NOT YET BEEN FULLY WORKED OUT. MEETING OF ALL INTERESTED GOE AGENCIES WHICH MARSHAL ISMAIL HAD INITIALLY PROPOSED HAS NOT YET BEEN CALLED. EMBASSY PAO AND ADVANCE CTF 65 PR GROUP HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING WORK OUT AD HOC ARRANGEMENTS FOR JOINTLY MANNED CAIRO CIB TO BE LOCATED IN TV STATION. ALTHOUGH ALL EGYPTIAN WORKING LEVEL SOURCES AGREE IDEA IS SOUND, WE WERE FINALLY TOLD YESTERDAY THAT MINISTER OF INFORMATION HATEM WOULD PERSONALLY HAVE TO APPROVE THIS. ACCORDINGLY, AMBASSADOR SENT LETTER DIRECTLY TO HATEM LATE YESTERDAY AFTERNOON REQUESTING PERMISSION TO POSITION JOINT CIB IN TV STATION. WE ARE STILL AWAITING A REPLY. INVOLVING AS IT DOES JURISDICTIONAL PROBLEMS AMONG VARIOUS MINISTRIES, EGYPTIAN HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTINGLY SLUGGISH ON THIS ONE.

4. BILLETING OF INCOMING NEWSMEN WILL REMAIN A PROBLEM AND WILL HAVE TO BE HANDLED BY CTF PR PEOPLE. AS DEPT KNOWS, THERE IS AN ACUTE SHORTAGE OF HOTEL SPACE IN CAIRO AT THE MOMENT AND WE ARE ENCOUNTERING GREATEST DIFFICULTY IN RESERVING ROOMS FOR OFFICIAL VISITORS. DAO HAS ALREADY POINTED OUT TO MILITARY COMMANDS THAT NEWSMEN COVERING NIMBUS STAR WILL HAVE TO OBTAIN THEIR OWN HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS.

5. UK ROLE: BRITISH MINE SWEEPERS AND DIVERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN IN ACTION NEAR PORT SAID. COMMANDER HUSBAND, WHO HEADS FLOTILLA, GAVE PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY INDICATING HOW PRELIMINARY WORK IS PROCEEDING. BRITISH HAVE GOTTEN SOME GOOD PUBLICITY OUT OF THEIR ACTIVITY TO DATE. UK EMBASSY, IN COORDINATION DRAFT SOFA AGREEMENTS, AGAIN RAISED QUESTION OF THE DESIRABILITY OF A TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE TO HANDLE "POLICY" AS OPPOSED TO OPERATIONAL MATTERS THAT MAY FLOW FROM NIMBUS STAR/MOON. WE SEE NO OBJECTION TO THIS, BUT WOULD WISH TO SOUND OUT EGYPTIANS BEFORE SETTING UP SUCH AN ORGANIZATION.

6. ARRIVAL INITIAL EQUIPMENT. FIRST C-5 ARRIVED YESTERDAY. OTHER AIRCRAFT, INCLUDING C-5S, ARE SCHEDULED FOR NEXT SEVERAL DAYS. THUS FAR EGYPTIANS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY RESPONSIVE TO SHORT LEAD TIME REQUIREMENTS INVOLVED IN OFF-LOADING AND HANDLING OF CARGO. ADMIRAL MCCAULEY AND CTF-65 ADVANCE GROUPS HAVE DEVELOPED EXCELLENT WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH EGYPTIANS AND EGYPTIAN ARE CLEARLY CONFIDENTIAL

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ANXIOUS TO COOPERATE WITHIN THEIR LIMITED CAPABILITIES. WHILE SOME PROBLEMS ARE CERTAIN TO ARISE IN AS COMPLEX AN OPERATION AS THIS, WE ARE CONFIDENT THESE CAN BE SOLVED AS NIMBUS STAR PROGRESSES. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPLOSIVES, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, TELECOMMUNICATION, NIMBUS STAR OPERATION, INTERNATIONAL CANALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974CAIRO02121
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740085-0478
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740446/aaaabphq.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13-Aug-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <12 FEB 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STATUS OF SOME ASPECTS OF NIMBUS STAR/MOON
TAGS: BEXP, MARR, EG, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005